

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5981

---

---

As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Health & Long-Term Care, February 04, 2008

**Title:** An act relating to lead poisoning prevention.

**Brief Description:** Providing for lead poisoning prevention education and screening.

**Sponsors:** Senators Kohl-Welles, Berkey, Roach, Rasmussen, Holmquist, Benton and Poulsen.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long-Term Care: 1/28/08, 2/4/08 [DPS-WM, w/oRec].

---

### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5981 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Fairley, Kastama, Kohl-Welles and Marr.

**Minority Report:** That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Pflug, Ranking Minority Member; Carrell.

**Staff:** Rhoda Donkin (786-7465)

**Background:** Exposure to lead is highly dangerous, especially to children under age six. Young children are more likely to ingest lead dust, and are more likely than adults to suffer toxic amounts because of their smaller and still developing bodies. Lead poisoning in children can cause irreversible learning difficulties and delayed neurological and physical development.

Lead was commonly used in paint until it was banned from residential use in 1978. However, deterioration of lead surfaces is considered a continuing health threat, especially to children. In 1992 the federal government developed a national program to prevent and reduce lead-based paint exposures. The program allows the state to seek accreditation of lead-based paint prevention activities. In Washington, the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (DCTED) administers lead prevention programs.

**Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute):** The Department of Health (DOH) must sponsor a series of public service announcements on various media on lead prevention topics, including providing information about DCTED programs.

---

*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

DOH must develop culturally and linguistically appropriate information pamphlets about childhood lead poisoning, and the importance of testing for elevated blood levels. Pamphlets must be distributed to parents and guardians of children under age six.

DOH must establish a program for early identification of persons at risk of having elevated blood-lead levels. The program will screen children under age six in certain target populations described in the bill. Comprehensive records of all screenings will be compiled.

**EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute):** Changes the definition of "elevated blood lead level" to 2 micrograms from 10 micrograms, and changes the definition of lead based paint to 600 parts per million.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill:** PRO: We should all be concerned about lead levels in the environment. This allows for widespread public education and screening for high risk individuals, especially children. Blood lead levels drop rapidly when the sources are removed, so its important to find sources in the environment and protect children from the damage lead causes.

OTHER: This bill reaches farther than current funding will permit. It is good to reinvigorate education and outreach efforts, but these need to be funded.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Jeanne Kohl-Wells, prime sponsor; Senator Eric Oemig; John Roberts, League of Women Voters; Steven Gilbert, Institute of Neurotoxicology & Neurological Disorders; Tami Giles, parent.

OTHER: Gregg Grunenfelder, Department of Health; John Woodring, Pacific Northwest Paint Council.